

ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting of Monday, April 2, 2007
Mansfield Community Center (MCC) Conference Room

MINUTES

1. The meeting was **called to order** by Acting Chair Jay Ames at 7:05p. Members present: Jay Ames, Kim Bova, Blanche Serban, Joan Prugh. Others present: Jay O'Keefe (staff), Curt Vincente (staff), Matthew Hart (staff).

2. Approval of Minutes (3/5/07). Committee approved minutes as written. Jay O'Keefe clarified that the paragraph ("Jay O'K. explained the MCC staff's reasoning in removing the Jacobi work. The MCC is not an art museum, and its patrons do not arrive with the same expectations that they would bring to a museum or gallery. Accordingly, it seemed reasonable to accommodate those expectations by removing a work some patrons found offensive") was not inclusive of all reasoning by staff that led to the removal of art work in January and February of 2007.

3. **Public comment:** None

4. **Correspondence:** No general correspondence was reported.

5. **Old Business**

- A. **Committee Membership:** The committee welcomed Joan Prugh to the committee. The Town Council Committee on Committees appointed Ms. Prugh in late March. Her term will expire on 3/1/08. Jay O'Keefe distributed a revised committee membership information sheet, indicating the terms of all current members to expire on 3/1/08. Beverly Rigler who attending past meetings to determine her interest and ability to serve contacted Jay O'Keefe to inform him that she regrets not being able to join the committee at this time. There are currently 2 vacancies on the committee.
- B. **Double Sided Showcase Options:** Jay O'Keefe reported that it was possible to install a hanging rod within the showcase. He asked the committee for the load (weight) requirements and style options. The committee felt that no more than 50lbs. would be adequate. Jay O'Keefe would like the committee to select an appropriate color and style for the hanging rod.
- C. **Artwork Display Policy:** Much discussion was held regarding the steps in creating an art display policy. Curt Vincente addressed the committee to express the various steps to the process leading to the removal artwork. He stressed that he was supportive of the town councils decision to reinstate the artwork and that overall felt the art displays have been very positive at the community center. Mr. Vincente also wanted the committee to understand the removal of artwork (two sculpture pieces and one photograph) at the center was carefully considered. After receiving immediate and numerous complaints regarding some sculpture work and complaints regarding a photograph of the American flag collage from community members, staff (Curt Vincente and Jay O'Keefe) reviewed

the process of art work selection, called several committee members into see the work in question and referred to past minutes of arts advisory committee meetings. In doing so, staff felt vocal community complaints and that the process of art screening was not consistent in what was followed in past displays of art. Specifically, the work of both Mr. Jacobi (photography) and Ms. Easton (sculpture) was not viewed by the committee or staff before being displayed. In addition, past arts committee meeting minutes identified that in the absence of a policy Parks and Recreation staff would have final authority in what was to be placed in the center for public viewing. Jay O'Keefe noted that he was present at the January meeting in which the committee scheduled Ms. Easton's and Mr. Jacobi's. However, given the positive history of the committees past recommendations, he did not express a need to view the pieces of work. He did not want to delay the tight time for new rotation. Blance Serban commented on how she was called by Mr. O'Keefe to view the sculpture pieces in question and did not disagree with removing or repositioning some of the pieces. Jay Ames commented that Ms. Easton had shown work here in the past and did not feel it necessary to view each piece of work before having it displayed.

The committee discussed philosophical and legal issues associated with art displays and ideas regarding a policy and complaint handling system. Most committee members verbalized a need to prevent highly offensive (such as pornography) from being displayed but were concerned to exclude certain types of art as a matter of policy. Matthew Hart offered to invite the Dean of Fine Arts from UConn and the Town Attorney to the next meeting. The committee was very much in favor of this and thought it could be helpful in formulating a policy. Jay O'Keefe suggested that the committee meet more frequently in order to produce a display policy in a timely manner. Members agreed to try and meet prior to the regularly scheduled monthly meeting with Dean Woods and Attorney O'Brien.

5. New Business

- A. Art Work Display Applications: Applications were received from Anita Baker, Bobbie Brown and Lori Smolin. Ms. Serban was to contact Ms. Baker, Ms. Bova to contact Ms. Brown and Lori Smolin.
- B. Art Displays (April 15-July 15): Jay Ames will show visual abstract art in halls and sitting room. The month of the young child art work will be displayed in the show cases until the end of April.

6. Adjourned at 9:00p. Next meeting: 7:00p, Monday May 7, 2007

Submitted by Jay O'Keefe, (4/10/07) in absence of Scott Lehman.